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A TO Z INDIA

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HAPPY

Navratri

Considered as one of the most auspicious festival for Hindus, Indians all across the world celebrate 'Navaratri' with full fervour and great enthusiasm. On each of these nine days, Hindus worship Goddess Durga and her nine different manifestations. Not only this, each day of Navaratri is associated with a specific food and colour.

Here are the nine manifestations of Goddess Durga that are worshipped during Navaratri:

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 1 | SHAILAPUTRI

Day 1: Goddess Shailputri

Shailputri is the form of goddess that was born as the daughter of the mountain king ‘Parvat Raj Himalaya’. She is also known as Parvati, a name that comes from 'Parvat' which is the Sanskrit word for mountains. In her previous birth, goddess Parvati was Sati – the daughter of Daksha Prajapati. Also known as Bhavani or Hemavati, Shailputri is the absolute form of mother nature. Goddess Shailputri is depicted with two hands and has a crescent moon on her forehead holding a trident in her right hand and a lotus flower in the left and riding a bull called Nandi.

Devotees offer pure ghee atto bless the devotee with a life free of diseases and illness. You can prepare dishes such as Aloo Ka Halwa, Rajgira ka Laddoo or Sabudana khichdi for bhog.

The colour that devotees are supposed to wear on this day is Yellow.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 2 | BRAHMACHARINI

Day 2: Goddess Brahmacharini

The second day of Navaratri festival is dedicated to Goddess Brahmacharini or Goddess Uma. The goddess wears white clothes, holds a japa mala (rosary) in her right hand and Kamandal, a water utensil in her left hand. This is the avatar in which she performs 'tapa' or deep penance to reach the ultimate truth. Worshiping this form of goddess is known to invoke the spirit of penance, denial, virtue and nobility.

Goddess Brahmacharini is a lover of simple food and offerings. Devotees serve a bhog of sugar and fruits to this form of Shakti. You can prepare dishes such as Singhare Atte Ka Halwa or Kacche Kele Ki Barfi as the offering to the deity.

Green is the colour of the day for her devotees.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 3 | CHANDRAGHANTA

Day 3: Goddess Chandraghanta

The third appearance of Durga is Goddess Chandraghanta. Also known as Maa Sherawali, Chandika, this manifestation of the goddess is worshipped in Vaishno Devi. According to Hindu Mythology, she is believed to reward people with her grace, bravery and courage. By her grace all the sins, distresses, physical sufferings, mental tribulations and ghostly hurdles of the devotees are eliminated. The deity has eight hands holding a Trishula (trident), Gada (mace), bow-arrow, khadak (sword), Kamala (lotus flower), Ghanta (bell) and Kamandal (water pot), while one of her hands remains in blessing posture. Representing bravery and courage, she rides on a tiger or lion. Her complexion is golden. As the name suggests, she wears a half moon on her forehead and has a third eye in the middle of her forehead. The vicious goddess is pleased by offering milk. You can cook elaborate dishes such as Sabudana Kheer or Makhana Kheer for the bhog.

The colour of the day for her devotees is Grey.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 4 | KUSHMANDA

Day 4: Goddess Kushmanda

Goddess Kushmanda is worshiped on the fourth day of the festival of Navaratri and is believed to improve health and bestow wealth and strength. This deity has eight hands, due to which, she is also known as Ashtabhuja. The name Kushmanda is made of three other words - 'Ku' (little), 'Ushma' (warmth or energy) and 'Amnda' (egg) which means the one who created the universe as the "Little Cosmic Egg" with energy and warmth. According to Hindu mythology, the universe was a dark space and it was this goddess who produced the Cosmic Egg with her smile.

Devotees worship the Goddess by observing fasts and offering Malpua as bhog.

The colour for this day is Orange.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 5 | SKANDAMATA

Day 5: Goddess Skandamata

The fifth goddess holds her son named ' Skanda ' in her arms. She is a goddess who comes from the fire and is worshiped for gaining knowledge or wisdom. Her complexion is white, and she is seated on the lotus. She rides on lion and has four arms. While she carries lotus in her upper two hands, she holds six-headed baby Kartikeya with one hand and bestows blessings with the other. It is believed that she awards devotees with salvation, power, prosperity and treasures.

Devotees offer fruits, especially banana, as bhog to the deity. The best food options include Kache Kele Ki Barfi, Banana Chips (with rock salt), Banana Walnut Lassi and Kele Ki Sabzi.

Her devotees are supposed to wear White.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 6 | KATYAYINI

Day 6: Goddess Katyayani

Riding a lion, Goddess Katyayani is depicted having four arms, and carrying a sword. She can be pleased with true devotion and piety. She is the daughter of Sage Katyayan. According to mythology, the sage Katyayani prayed for years to Maa Durga to have her as his daughter. She granted his wish and was born as the sage's daughter by the banks of the Yamuna river. Devotees offer honey as prasad to Goddess Katyayani to seek her blessings to fill their lives with sweetness and help them get rid of bitter troubles.

You can use your creative instinct and make your own vrat-friendly Honey Chilli Potatoes or Mixed Halva treats for snacks.

Red is the colour of the day for her ardent devotees.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 7 | KALRATRI

Day 7: Goddess Kalratri

Seventh day of Navaratri is dedicated to the Goddess Kalratri. This form of Shakti is dark as moonless night and hence is called as 'Kalratri'. Kalratri is widely regarded as one of the many destructive forms of the Mother Goddess, which include Kali, Mahakali, Bhadrakali, Bhairavi, Mrityu, Rudrani, Chamunda, Chandi and Durga. With four hands, she rides a donkey and her hair is left open in a dishevelled way. She carries a sword, a trident and a noose and possesses three eyes on her forehead that are known to contain the entire universe. She is the protector of mankind and destroyer of the dark forces. This form of Goddess is believed to destroy negative energies and make her devotees fearless. The ferocious goddess is pleased by offering jaggery. You can add jaggery to your vrat-friendly Sabudana kheer, Kuttu Ke Atte Ka Halwa and even in Tea.

Maha Saptami is the beginning of Utsava Puja and the colour of the day is Blue for all.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 8 | MAHAGAURI

Day 8: Goddess Mahagauri

Often classified as household goddess, Durga Ashtami is dedicated to Goddess Mahagauri. As per the Hindu scriptures, Mahagauri is worshiped as the four-armed deity who rides on a bull or a white elephant carrying a Trishula (Trident) and a damru (Tambourine). According to Hindu mythology, this form of goddess has the power to fulfil all the desires of her devotees. The one who worships the goddess gets relief from all the sufferings in life and blessed with peace, food and prosperity.

Devotees offer coconut as prasad to the deity. It is widely believed that donating coconuts to the Brahmans on Ashtami, blesses a childless couple with a child. You can make Coconut Barfi or Coconut Laddoos as bhog.

On this day, Saraswati Mata Puja is done and people are supposed to wear Pink.

HAPPY NAVRATRI

DAY 9 | SIDDHIDATRI

Day 9: Goddess Siddhidatri

The last day of Navaratri is dedicated to the Goddess Siddhidatri. Devotees on this day, break their nine-day fast and worship all the nine forms of Goddess Durga. Commonly classified as the ultimate form of Shakti, this goddess is said to achieve all the 8 siddhis and is thus half the body of Lord Shiva. Goddess Siddhidatri is seen as a four-armed deity sitting calmly on a lotus, holding a lotus, mace, discus and a book. This form of Durga signifies the ushering of knowledge and wisdom over ignorance. To protect family from unwanted mishaps, devotees offer sesame seeds (Til) as prasad. You can make Til Ke Barfi or Til Ke Laddoos or Til Ki Chikki as prasad. On the ninth day, after the fast is over, dishes such as halwa, puri and chana are also offered to the goddesses as bhog. The Maha Navami puja is done. Kanya puja is also done on this auspicious day for females.

Purple is regarded as the colour of the day for all her devotees.

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